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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship of accreditation and institutional characteristics, social-psychological factors of college presidents, and institutional compliance abilities. It also sought to determine if there were selected differences between two year and four year institutions. The Survey of Interpersonal Values was mailed to 249 college presidents of two-year and four-year accredited and non-accredited institutions. The survey measured support, conformity, recognition, independence, benevolence, and leadership. Compliance abilities for membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools were also measured. Prominent factors related to accreditation were institutional compliance abilities and institutional characteristics. There was no significant relationship between accreditation and the social-psychological factors of college presidents. Two-year and four-year institutions differed on institutional age, full-time equivalent enrollment, and full-time faculty. Includes six references. (JDD)

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SIGNIFICANT SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ACCREDITED AND NON-ACCREDITED COLLEGES

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SIGNIFICANT SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ACCREDITED AND NON-ACCREDITED COLLEGES

Accreditation is a means of signifying to the public that an institution has been declared as satisfactory. Accreditation means that a local community's institutions compare favorably with other institutions determined to be acceptable (Shirer, 1987). It suggests that indicators are present for continuing this level of effectiveness.

Accountability for higher education began to be emphasized when national reports on the lowered quality of education created a new urgency to document educational results of programs. Outcomes evaluation, or assessment, has become an overriding theme in higher education, and accrediting bodies are emphasizing this in their examination of institutions.

Self-examination leading to improvement in quality, consultation, advice from representatives of other institutions, and responding to required criteria are opportunities provided by the process of accreditation. In recent years, all six regional accrediting agencies in the United States have begun to require colleges and universities to demonstrate their "educational effectiveness" in reaccreditation reviews (Ewell and Lisensky, 1988).

Although there is a considerable body of research on accredited institutions, studies pertaining to non-accredited institutions remain limited. The visibility that accreditation fosters among

accredited institutions does not exist among the non-accredited institutions. The studies of presidential traits and student characteristics of accredited institutions have increased in the 1980s due to national reports concerning institutional effectiveness. These traits and characteristics modify the institution's curriculum, which is in turn also influenced by accreditation. A major purpose of accreditation is to develop the curriculum and its components to meet the highest degree of integrity and to maintain established standards that contribute to the effectiveness of institutions. Therefore, from a theoretical viewpoint, accreditation should enhance institutional effectiveness. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of accreditation and institutional characteristics, social-psychological factors of college presidents, and institutional compliance abilities, and then determine if there were selected differences between two- and four-year institutions.

Methodology

The population for this study consisted of 582 two-and four-year institutions, accredited and non-accredited, within the geographical region of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Using a stratified random sampling technique, 110 accredited two-year institutions, 52 accredited four-year institutions, 54 non-accredited two-year institutions, and 33 non-accredited four-year institutions were selected to be surveyed.

The Survey of Interpersonal Values (Gordon, 1976) and a demographic sheet consisting of institutional characteristics and institutional compliance abilities were mailed to college presidents of the selected institutions. The survey measured six factored interpersonal value dimensions of (1) support - being treated with understanding, receiving encouragement from other people, being treated with kindness and consideration, (2) conformity - doing what is socially correct, following regulations closely, doing what is accepted and proper, being a conformist, (3) recognition - being looked up to and admired, being considered important, attracting favorable notice, achieving recognition, (4) independence - having the right to do whatever one wants to do, being free to make one's own decisions, being able to do things in one's own way, (5) benevolence - doing things for other people, sharing with others, helping the unfortunate, being generous, and (6) leadership - being in charge of other people, having authority over others, being in a position of leadership or power (Gordon, 1976). The value dimensions, or "objects" of value were social-psychological states which the respondent viewed as important. The test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from .79 to .89 for the scores. The Kuder-Richardson reliability results ranged from .71 to .86; median estimate was r=.82 (Robinson, 1970).

Additionally, the demographic data sheet which was mailed to college presidents included the selected institutional characteristics of age of the institution, full-time student

equivalency enrollment, number of faculty, administrative, clerical personnel in full-time or part-time status, number of programs of study, number of recognized graduates, whether two- or four-year institutions, and whether accredited or non-accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Furthermore, this instrument had a section designed to measure the compliance abilities for eligibility for associational membership. These abilities were limited to the following: (1) commitment to comply with the criteria of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, (2) formal authority from a governmental agency within the associational area to award degrees, certificates, or diplomas, (3) at least five members on its governing board, (4) appointment of a chief executive officer, (5) one or more degree programs offered based on at least two years for the associate level and four years for the baccalaureate level, (6) accessibility to sufficient learning resources to support courses, programs, and degrees offered, (7) established adequate financial base, (8) definition of a statement of purpose or mission, and (9) at least one full-time member with responsibility for oversight and coordination in each degree program offered (Criteria for Accreditation, 1988).

Results and Discussion

Multiple Linear Regression analysis of the data revealed a significant relationship. Table 1 presents the significance among

selected institutional characteristics, social-psychological factors, institutional compliance abilities of two- and four-year institutions, and accreditation ($F=8.64$, $df=20,114$; $p<.05$).

Table 2 showed this same significant relationship among selected institutional characteristics, social-psychological factors, institutional compliance abilities, and accreditation ($F=4.25$, $df=18.77$, $p<.05$), ($F=6.24$,$df=18,17$, $p<.05$) for two-year institutions.

Table 1

Relationship of Institutional Characteristics, Social-Psychological Factors, and Institutional Compliance Abilities of Two-and Four-year Institutions with Accreditation.

	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	F Ratio	p	R Square
Regression	20	11.44	8.64	.00	.603
Residual	114	7.54			

To consider the differences between two-and four-year institutions on each of the variables of selected institutional characteristics, social-psychological factors, and institutional compliance abilities, only institutional age, enrollment of full-time equivalent students, and number of full-time faculty showed a significant difference, as presented in Table 4. Table 5 showed information indicating that there was not a significant independent

relationship between each of the college presidents' social-psychological factors of Support, Conformity, Recognition, Independence, Benevolence, and Leadership and the variable of accreditation.

Table 2

Relationship of Institutional Characteristics, Social-Psychological Factors, and Institutional Compliance Abilities with Accreditation of Two-Year Institutions

	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	F Ratio	p	R Square
Regression	18	4.46	4.25	.00	.499
Residual	77	4.49			

Table 3

Relationship of Institutional Characteristics, Social-Psychological Factors, and Institutional Compliance Abilities with Accreditation of Four-year Institutions

	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	F Ratio	p	R Square
Regression	18	7.21	6.24	.00	.869
Residual	17	1.09			

Table 4

Intercorrelation Matrix of Variables Used in the Study

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS																						
1. Age	-14	-04	07	05	-03	15	48	02	12	-05	-01	-01	06	13	-01	-03	07	-08	12	-01	01	01
2. Enrollment		80	49	62	50	46	-33	52	32	-10	04	10	10	11	26	09	-15	-10	07	12	-02	07
3. Full-time Faculty			58	76	56	42	-20	61	41	-12	11	-04	-08	12	23	08	-01	-15	06	14	04	04
4. Full-time Administrators				74	43	27	-03	25	19	-07	02	03	10	15	15	06	-02	-25	11	13	01	14
5. Full-time Clerical					53	35	-06	44	35	-13	08	-08	01	17	25	02	-01	-25	10	20	03	14
6. Degree Programs						27	-11	33	25	-14	03	11	14	09	25	10	00	-19	12	07	01	17
7. Degree Granting Authority							-09	22	23	-06	14	18	33	07	14	20	-07	-13	07	-01	02	20
8. Institutional Level								-03	-12	-06	-15	-02	08	05	-06	-05	08	01	-03	-13	08	-05
9. SACS									64	-05	12	-07	-06	-11	29	06	07	-07	04	07	-05	-01
COMPLIANCE ABILITIES																						
10. Compliance										-05	13	-06	12	-09	25	12	15	-01	07	-02	-04	-03
11. Award											30	39	-16	-03	-03	-09	-19	07	-08	08	-01	10
12. Trustees												-03	-03	-04	08	-01	14	-08	03	-10	15	-10
13. Programs													40	-03	-04	03	-10	11	-02	-03	-16	10
14. Accessibility														03	-03	08	-10	-02	06	-07	01	14
15. Financial Base															20	15	-04	-06	03	01	-01	05
16. Responsibility																24	04	-07	01	-01	-04	05
IMPORTANCE OF ACCREDITATION IN FUTURE																						
17. Importance																	12	-01	-19	-16	-04	-01
SOCIAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS																						
18. Support																		-23	19	-24	-15	-43
19. Conformity																			-42	-35	-03	-32
20. Recognition																				40	23	-08
21. Independence																					21	-10
22. Benevolence																						-33
23. Leadership																						--

r=.166 (df=133)

Table 5

Relationship Between Social-Psychological Factors and Accreditation While Holding the Institutional Characteristics Constant

Factor Tested	Full Model R Square	Reduced Model R Square	RSQ Change	df	F	p
Zero Model	.410	0	.410	13, 121	6.5	.00
Support		.406	.004	1, 121	.91	.34
Conformity		.409	.001	1, 121	.30	.58
Recognition		.410	.000	1, 121	.01	.94
Independence		.409	.001	1, 121	.24	.62
Benevolence		.409	.001	1, 121	.26	.61
Leadership		.409	.001	1, 121	.18	.68

The prominent factors related to accreditation in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools were institutional compliance abilities and institutional characteristics of two- and four-year institutions. There was not a significant relationship among the social-psychological factors of college presidents and whether or not the responding institutions were accredited. Two- and four-year institutions differed on the categories of institutional age, full-time equivalent enrollment, and full-time faculty without regard to any of the other variables used in the study.

This investigation confirmed that the number of full-time

faculty per institution and institutional compliance abilities for eligibility in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools were major factors in predicting associational membership.

The study found that the college presidents' personal values that were measured by the Survey of Interpersonal Values were not significant in determining if the institutions were accredited. This finding does not suggest that the values and the goals of the president do not interact with the institutions' move toward accreditation, but that other factors may override personal decisions regarding accreditation.

Finally, the number of accredited institutions outnumbered the non-accredited institutions. Further study might show that it may be advantageous to target this latter group and evaluate their policies and procedures. Such evaluations could provide a greater opportunity for these institutions and students to succeed academically; and, at the same time, support an environment which promotes institutional effectiveness.

One of the basic purposes of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is to help institutions in standardizing and improving educational programs. Consequently, it would seem that all colleges, in their efforts to strengthen institutional effectiveness, should make additional attempts at following the criteria of the Association to ensure academic success.

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